

In the Interest of a Race

THIS issue of the *NORTHWESTERN* is given largely to exploiting the work of the Freedmen's Aid Society. The pages thus filled are especially commended to our readers. For years the *Advocates* have lent themselves to the advocacy of this cause in the issue nearest the birth date of Lincoln, and justifiably, too. The colored race shall forever revere the memory of Lincoln. He was their greatest earthly friend. The Rev. Abel M. White, author of the article in this issue entitled "When Lincoln First Noticed Me," related to us the following incident that, on its surface, carried no particular meaning, but beneath comprehended vastness itself.

Immediately following the assassination of Mr. Lincoln, great crowds surged about Ford's theater. From the alley back of the building out to the next street were thousands of Negroes. They were conscious that their friend had been shot and was not expected to live. Dr. White states that he will remember to his dying day the moan that arose from dusky concourse as he walked among them. With bowed heads and tearful eyes they moved slowly about ringing their hands and emitting a moan or wail that only those acquainted with the race can measurably appreciate. Thank God, that moan has been turned to rejoicing. A new race has sprung from the blood of Lincoln.

The Freedmen's Aid Society has had to work against odds for years. There are benevolences in the Church that make a more popular appeal, but it is doubtful if there is a call upon the benevolence of the Church more commanding. The passing years have not obviated the need of white support. The race will finally emerge from its helplessness. Indeed, it has worked wonders in the half century of freedom. The story bears the sign of magic. Nothing in the history of racial development has ever equaled this chapter written by the black man in America. Rejoicing should be general that a larger appreciation of the worth of the Negro is possessing the public, particularly the South. The past year has witnessed a migratory movement toward the Northland. Hundreds of thousands of Negroes have left the land of their birth to come to the more rigorous North, and in recent months the Southerner has been humming, and thinking hard as he hums, "We never miss the water till the well runs dry." This movement, whatever its causes, has resulted in a larger

appreciation of the place of the Negro in the Southland. It has created problems in both sections of the country, particularly the North, where many cities have had their Negro population nearly doubled.

The response of the colored man to the call of his country has been magnificent. He is a fighter. He has offered himself with an eagerness that speaks volumes for a race whose liberties, even in the face of the Constitution, have been largely withheld. A significant indication of the gradually changing attitude of the South as well as the North toward him is seen in the decreasing number of lynchings. Surely and steadily the race is lifting from the fen and fog into the sunlight of opportunity.

The Freedmen's Aid Society is the one agency in the Methodist Church to accomplish this end. Amid the multitudinous appeals created by the needs of the day, let us not forget the man in black. We can do nothing better than close these all too few words with the closing paragraph from the annual report of the secretaries of the society setting forth briefly the needs of the Freedmen schools:

Just at the present time the greatest need of our schools is larger appropriations. Our teachers, already meagerly compensated, find it difficult to meet the increased cost of living on salaries heretofore unusually small. Expenditures for repairs, improvements, and equipment must be made in order that buildings may not go to destruction, and equipment wear out and become worthless; but the cost of these is almost double what it was before the war began. Boarding hall supplies are nearly twice as expensive; but it is impossible to double the price of board to the needy students who patronize our schools. A fifty per cent increase in offerings from the Churches would scarcely meet the advanced cost which must be borne or close the schools. Even if all new building enterprises shall be omitted for the period of the war, the schools cannot be permitted to go into ruin and decay. They must be kept up. Boys and girls must be educated and trained as formerly for the ministry and other forms of leadership among our colored people. We dare not close our schools. The work which they do is imperative in the life of the nation, and we must strengthen our appeal to the Churches, that while other calls shall be responded to, this also, the cause of Christian education and uplift among the ten millions of our black people in the South, shall not be forgotten, but rather increased.

THE PRICE OF A SOUL

HE was a big Norwegian and he was as lonely as death. He

soon grew cold; and as they rose into men and women, foolish desires entered, and destroyed all the grace they had left. Nevertheless, great part of them stood firm, especially the

